

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03

SP-02 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-05 SS-15

STR-04 CEA-01 L-02 H-02 PA-01 PRS-01 IO-10 SAM-01

/103 W

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R 141704Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3895

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY BONN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BRUSSELS 4301

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR BE CG FR GW EAD

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE EUROPEAN ASSISTANCE FOR ZAIRIAN ECONOMY

1. SUMMARY. NOTED BELGIAN COLUMNIST MANU RUYS REPORTS THAT, IF ZAIRIAN ECONOMIC SITUATIONS DOES NOT IMPROVE, MORATORIUM ON EXTERNAL DEBT PAYMENTS WILL BE UNAVOIDABLE. HE SAYS PRESIDENT MOBUTU HOPES BELGIAN PRIME MINISTER WILL ORGANIZE MULTILATERAL EUROPEAN ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE. ACCORDING TO FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCE, GOB WOULD CONSIDER SUCH REQUEST FROM GOZ. END SUMMARY.

2. BELGIAN DAILY DE STANDAARD MAY 14 CARRIES ARTICLE ON ZAIRIAN ECONOMIC PROBLEMS BY INFLUENTIAL COLUMNIST MANU RUYS. RUYS IS KNOWN FOR HIS AUTHORITATIVE SOURCES AMONG FLEMISH SOCIAL CHRISTIANS (PARTY OF PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS) AND IN FOREIGN MINISTRY, AND IS REGARDED AS HAVING GOOD RELATIONS WITH PRESIDENT MOBUTU.

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3. RUYS REPORTS THAT ZAIRE MUST HAVE FIFTEEN BILLION BELGIAN FRANCS (OVER FOUR HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS). WITHIN THREE MONTHS OR STOP PAYMENTS ON ITS EXTERNAL DEBT. IT PRESENT SITUATION CONTINUES, MORATORIUM ON PAYMENTS WILL BE UNAVOIDABLE. INPUT OF PETRODOLLARS HOPED FOR BY ZAIRE, HE WRITES, DID NOT MATERIALIZE. US SITS ON FENCE, CONTINUING ITS POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR MOBUTU BUT NOT COMING TO HIS RESCUE FINANCIALLY. ZAIRIANS CONSIDER OTHER INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL AID WHICH HAS BEEN OFFERED TO BE "HUMILIATING AND TECHNICALLY UNFEASIBLE."

4. RUYS CONCLUDES THAT ONLY OPTION FOR ZAIRE IS EUROPEAN AID, BUT SAYS THAT, EVEN IF BELGIUM WERE WILLING, IT COULD NOT PROVIDE SUCH AID ALONE. ANSWER IS COOPERATIVE EFFORT AMONG COUNTRIES HAVING IMPORTANT COMMERCIAL INTERESTS IN ZAIRE: FRANCE, WEST GERMANY, AND BELGIUM. (RUMOR HAS IT THAT IRAN MIGHT ALSO PARTICIPATE.) ACCORDING TO RUYS, MOBUTU HOPES THAT PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS, WHOSE STATURE IN EUROPE HAS INCREASED CONSIDERABLY IN PAST YEAR, WILL PLAY CENTRAL ROLE IN BRINGING ABOUT MULTILATERAL EUROPEAN AID. HE SAYS THIS EXPLAINS WHY COLLABORATORS OF MOBUTU HAVE CALLED ON PRIME MINISTER, ALTHOUGH PRINCIPLE ISSUE IN APRIL MEETING IN SPAIN, (BRUSSELS 3342) WAS COMPENSATION FOR NATIONALIZED BELGIAN PROPERTIES. NO SOLUTIONS WERE REACHED THEN BUT CONTACTS GO ON. RUYS ALSO ASKS RHETORICALLY WHETHER IT WAS ONLY COINCIDENCE THAT ENVOY OF MOBUTU WAS PRESENT IN PARIS WHEN TINDEMANS VISITED PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING MAY 9.

5. RUYS COMMENTS THAT TINDEMANS MUST SOON CHOOSE BETWEEN VIEWS OF THOSE (SUCH AS SOCIALIST EDMOND LEBURTON) WHO SEE ZAIRE AS IMPORTANT IN FUTURE OF EUROPE AS SOURCE OF CHEAP ENERGY, AND THOSE IN BELGIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY WHO "NO LONGER BELIEVE IN ZAIRE "AND THINK TIME HAS COME TO FOCUS ON OTHER COUNTRIES.

6. REFERRING TO RUYS ARTICLE, FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCE TOLD US THAT GOB WOULD FAVORABLY CONSIDER HELPING ZAIRE IN MULTILATERAL FRAMEWORK IF ZAIRE ASKED FOR SUCH HELP. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COOPERATION WOULD NOT HAVE TO BE LIMITED TO GERMANY AND FRANCE BUT MIGHT INCLUDE IMF OR OTHER INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS. SOURCE DENIED THAT GOB HAS HAD CONTACT WITH ENVOYS FROM MOBUTU SINCE MEETING IN SPAIN. FIRESTONE

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